

ENTITY VALIDATION SERVICES REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION NOTICE FOR MARKET RESEARCH ONLY – NO AWARD WILL BE MADE FROM THIS NOTICE

The Government is requesting input from providers with the skill and capabilities to perform Entity Validation Services and requesting feedback from stakeholders who may have comments relative to the subject matter described in this RFI, entitled “Entity Validation Services.” This RFI is for business planning purposes only. The Government welcomes all comments to this RFI but is under no obligation to provide responses or individual feedback. The Government is requesting information about viable alternatives from all sectors, including private companies, non-profits, not-for-profits, and Federal Government providers.

This Request for Information is issued for information and planning purposes only and does not constitute a solicitation nor does it restrict the Government as to the ultimate acquisition approach or strategy. In accordance with FAR 15.201(e), responses to this notice are not offers and cannot be accepted by the Government to form a binding contract. A price proposal is not required at this time. Concise responses to the RFI are requested and marketing materials are neither requested nor desired. Interested parties are to provide the information outlined in this RFI to: Mrs. Julie Green at julie.green@gsa.gov on or before the date specified in the FBO notice.

The Government is seeking to determine the availability of options to perform Entity Validation Services for the express purpose of protecting the integrity of the taxpayer's dollars throughout the award process. Entity Validation Services are based on federal statute and policy regulations. The Government is interested in responses to the questions in this RFI associated with these capabilities. This RFI is intended to encourage creative strategies and responses from providers of services that might be capable of meeting some or all Entity Validation Services outlined in this RFI. The Government wishes to determine whether Entity Validation Services are readily available, the extent to which such services may be feasibly implemented, and where innovative approaches are appropriate. Specifically, the Government encourages responses to all or part of the Entity Validation Services described in this RFI.

Definitions, for purposes of this RFI, include:

- Entity – refers to prime contractors, organizations or individuals applying for assistance awards, those receiving loans, sole proprietors, corporations, partnerships, and any Federal Government agencies desiring to do business with the Government.
- Validation – objective verification; returning accurate information about an entity. The data corresponds to the real world identity of the entity.
- Entity Validation Services – a method to determine uniqueness, which could include the assignment or use of a unique entity identifier, validation of certain data, and associated services.

BACKGROUND

This background information is provided to set context for the request for information and is provided for informational purposes only.

Entity Validation Services – Current State

The Federal Government awarded over \$3 trillion dollars in contracts, grants, loans, and other Federal assistance to entities in fiscal year 2016. The viability of each entity wishing to do business with the Government, or receive assistance from the Government, must be validated prior to its entering into a business relationship with the Government.

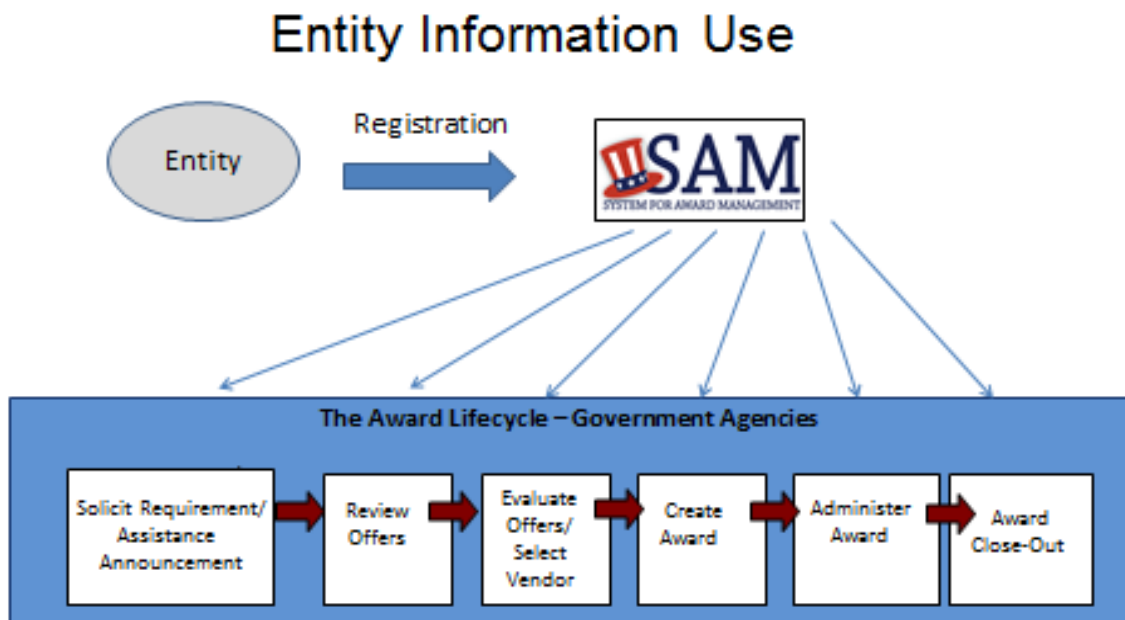
The General Services Administration's (GSA) Integrated Award Environment (IAE) maintains a contract for Entity Validation Services.

Entity Validation Services currently include the assignment of a unique identifier and objective verification (validation) of entity-provided information against authoritative sources for data associated with the unique identifier. Validation currently occurs within 24 hours. Validation services include:

1. Address Standardization – a properly formatted and postal service-recognized address, to include international addresses
2. Address Verification – the stated address must be tied to a business entity, established at that specific location
3. Business Legitimacy – established as legal entity name + Address Standardization and verification that is independently verified from a specified number of independent data sources
4. Confirmation of the existence of and/or assignment of a unique identifier formatted as a 9-digit numeric
5. Corporate Hierarchy – maintained and updated with changes for the life of the unique identifier

The unique entity identifier is currently the Data Universal Number System (DUNS®) number with which entities register in the System for Award Management (SAM). The unique entity identifier is tied in SAM to the legal entity name, 'doing business as' name, and the physical address that corresponds to it. Entities awarded Federal procurement and grants actions, with limited exceptions, are required to register in SAM. The information from SAM is used throughout the government, to include all aspects of the procurement and financial assistance processes.

The following diagram depicts how entity information is used throughout the federal award process:



The above process is supported by a variety of government-wide and agency systems, all of which share the Entity Information supplied from SAM.

ENTITY VALIDATION SERVICES – DESIRED OUTCOMES

The Government is interested in information on Entity Validation Services for use in federal government business processes – to include all aspects of the procurement and financial assistance processes (from pre-award to award to post-award reporting, invoicing, and payments). Desired experience of potential respondents:

1. Have a demonstrated understanding of Entity Validation Services, including the need for accurate data, timely updates, and adherence to federally recognized standards
2. Have a demonstrated ability to handle entity validation services in an expedited, real-time or near-real-time, robust and reliable manner
3. Have a proven track record of accurately validating, collecting, and maintaining data regarding entities located both in the U.S. and non-U.S.
4. Have the ability to potentially validate and/or register thousands of entities, throughout the U.S. and non-U.S.
5. Have the ability to address the scale of the Entity Validation Services statistics as identified in this RFI
6. Be experienced in working internationally with globally, linguistically, and culturally diverse customers and stakeholders
7. Possess the capability to adapt to emerging and evolving government requirements or policy-driven processes for future entity validation services

Data associated with all of the Entity Validation Services:

1. Government has unlimited right to use, disclose, and share all data associated with the entity, including the identifier, if applicable, and maintains it in perpetuity
2. All data fields including any provider's identifier are available for open use and reuse, both domestic and global
3. Allow government to trace, disclose, and share a detailed hierarchy of entities at all levels
4. Able to transition a customer(s) to your services from those of another provider

Entity Validation Services include three components: Core Validation Services, Additional Services, and a method to determine unique assignment. The following section includes a breakdown of each of these three components, and the minimum expectations associated with each. Respondents should address all or a portion of these components in their RFI response.

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Core Validation

Core Validation Services includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Method to determine uniqueness
2. Confirmation if the entity is unique
3. Objective information about the entity, which includes:
 - a. Confirmation of data provided by the entity
 - b. Data validated should include:
 - i. Physical address - Must be a postal verified address in the U.S. or ISO 3166 GENC format for international entities
 - ii. Legal Entity name
 - iii. Monitor for any updates/changes to verified information
4. Addition of entities at the request of the Government, such as when entity information is incomplete or isn't readily available.
5. Customer support capabilities (including entity updates), for U.S. and non-U.S.

Core Validation services should occur as near real-time as possible.

Additional Services

Additional services include additional validation capabilities that may be included as part of core validation, or requested by the Government on an as needed basis to all entities or a subset thereof. Additional services include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Verify doing business as name
2. Verify out of business
3. Verify entity telephone number
4. Verify city and state of entity registration
5. Verify date entity was founded
6. Verify number of employees at each location
7. Verify names of executive officer and key managers
8. Verify industry in which entity operates
9. Identify organizational hierarchy
10. Profit status (e.g., for-profit, non-profit, not-for-profit)
11. Corporation status (Y/N; if yes, state and country of incorporation)
12. Credit scoring
13. Risk analysis

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14. Any other additional data that may be used to assist the government in validating entity information

Unique Assignment Services

If part of your validation services involves creation or assignment of a unique identifier these services should be:

1. Assignable for entities as near real-time as possible
2. Ensure interoperability with the SAM system and data and ensure a successful transition in process.
3. Able to be assigned at the discretion of the government for (1) limited purposes such as testing, training; (2) identify excluded entities; or (3) to be used in an ordinary course of Government business in a production environment
4. Available with no registration or maintenance fee to entities that are applying for a unique entity identifier to do business with the Government

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RESPONSES TO THIS NOTICE – For Industry

Providing a narrative summary or specific example is more helpful than providing links to websites.

Respondents who can provide Entity Validation Services, please provide the following information and address the following questions in your RFI response:

1. Name of Company
2. Address of Company
3. Name, phone number and email address of company representative
4. Company size standard and/or socio-economic standing; i.e., large business, small business, veteran-owned small business, service-disabled veteran-owned small business, HUB Zone small business, small disadvantaged business, or women-owned small business
5. List any GSA schedule contracts or Government Wide Acquisition Contracts (GWAC) held by your company
6. Your Company's Primary NAICS code classification that best corresponds to the Government's Desired Outcomes
7. Introduce your organization (e.g., parent, age, size, number of customers, offices, number of employees, etc.).
8. List any relevant web sites for your company and its offerings.
9. Identify major customers, similar in scope.
10. Provide an affirmative statement if you can comply with the following:
 - Government has unlimited right to use, disclose, and share all data associated with the entity, including the identifier, if applicable, and maintains it in perpetuity
 - All data fields including any provider's identifier are available for open use and reuse, both domestic and global.

QUESTIONS FOR INDUSTRY

Please address the following questions in your RFI response:

1. Does your company perform the Core, additional, Unique Assignment services, and/or other services? Describe your processes for each of the services for which you are providing a response.
2. Explain your method to determine that an entity is unique. Describe your process (flow).
3. What are the licensing restrictions on your services, technology, or data?

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4. Do you have the capability to provide the government with information about individuals as well as entities? If so, please provide the data elements that are captured and explain how your process differs for each?
5. How do you determine and maintain information about organizational hierarchy? What data elements are captured?
6. Describe the process of recording historical changes as entities split, merge, and change, so that data can continue to be associated with them as they undergo these transformations over time. What data elements are monitored?
7. What are your time-frames for validating an entity and/or assigning a unique entity identifier (if applicable)?
8. What, if any, are the restrictions on public access to the information you collect and deliver? Are you willing to allow public access to organizational hierarchy structures?
9. Describe your commercial pricing methodology or approach. Specifically, what Core and/or additional services are included in your commercial pricing approach? A price proposal is not required.
10. Are your processes the same for non-U.S. as it is for U. S. in terms of depth and breadth of coverage (data) and response time for services provided? How extensive is your non-U.S. presence? How many countries do your services cover?
11. How frequently do you update entity information?
12. Do you have experience transitioning a customer(s) to your services from those of another provider? Please provide a large-scale example, similar in scope to what is described in this RFI.
13. If your approach includes providing a unique identifier, specify the globally accepted data standard. If it is not globally-accepted, describe your capability to associate it with other globally-accepted unique identifiers.
14. Describe customer support capabilities (including entity updates), for U.S. and non-U.S.? What channels do you use (self-service, assisted service)?
15. How many entities does your system/service track/validate/maintain/manage?
16. List any software required to use your system (i.e., web browsers, browser plug-ins, system extensions, databases, etc.).
17. How does your company safeguard entity data?
18. What other concepts or processes should the government be considering?
19. What issues or concerns do you foresee with respect to entity validation services described in this RFI?
20. What are creative/innovative ideas for how to structure the Government's approach?

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RESPONSES TO THIS NOTICE – For Other Stakeholders

Please provide the following information and address the following questions in your response:

1. Name
2. Contact information
3. Organization or group represented

QUESTIONS FOR OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

When answering the following questions, it is requested that you provide narrative responses or describe specific examples as these are more helpful than providing links to websites.

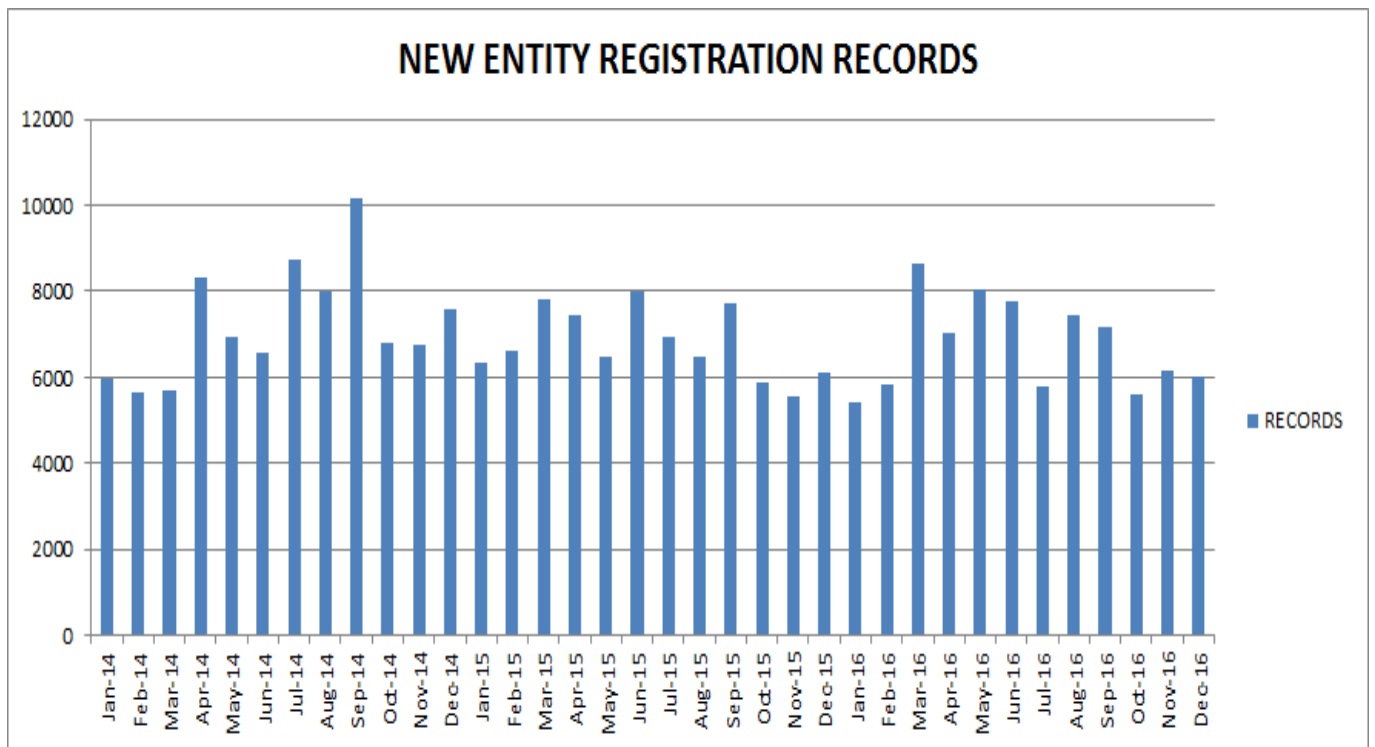
1. Are there other services used in industry that would benefit the Government?
2. What other concepts or processes should the Government be considering in support of improving data transparency?
3. What issues or concerns do you foresee with respect to Entity Validation Services described in this RFI?

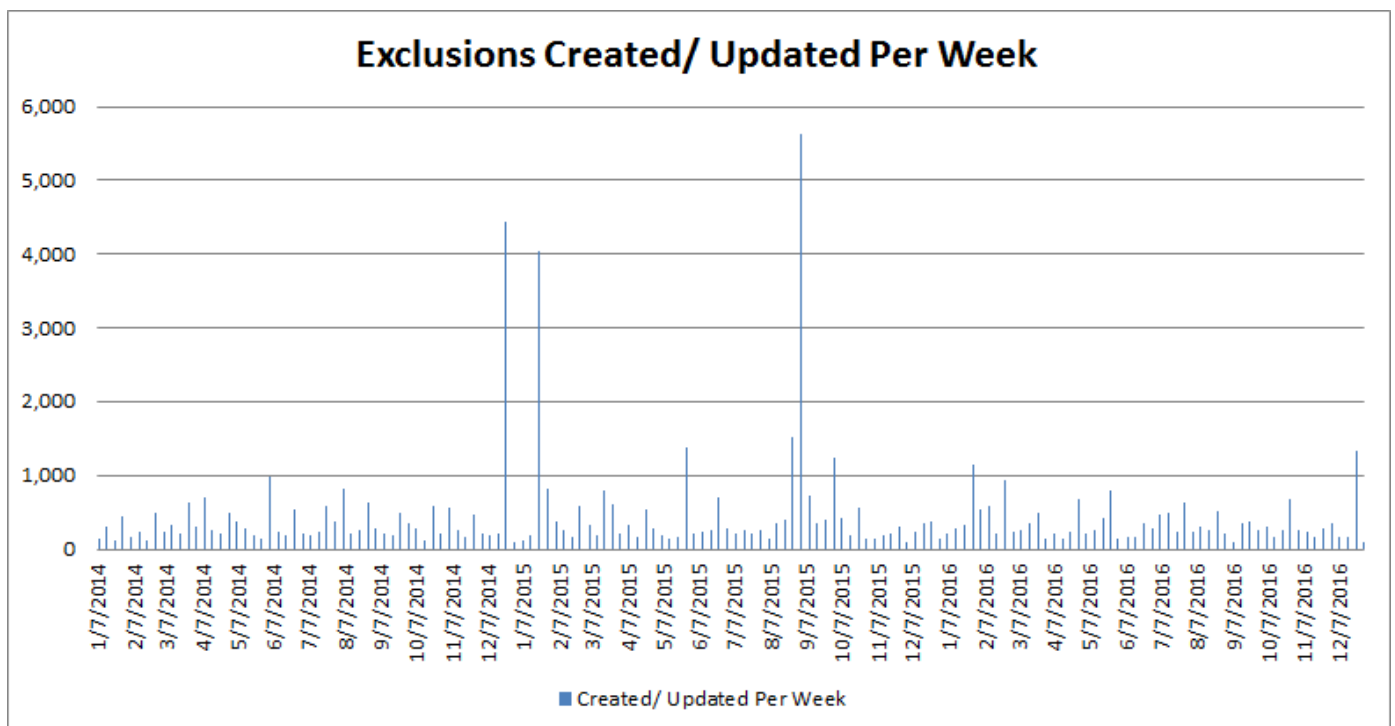
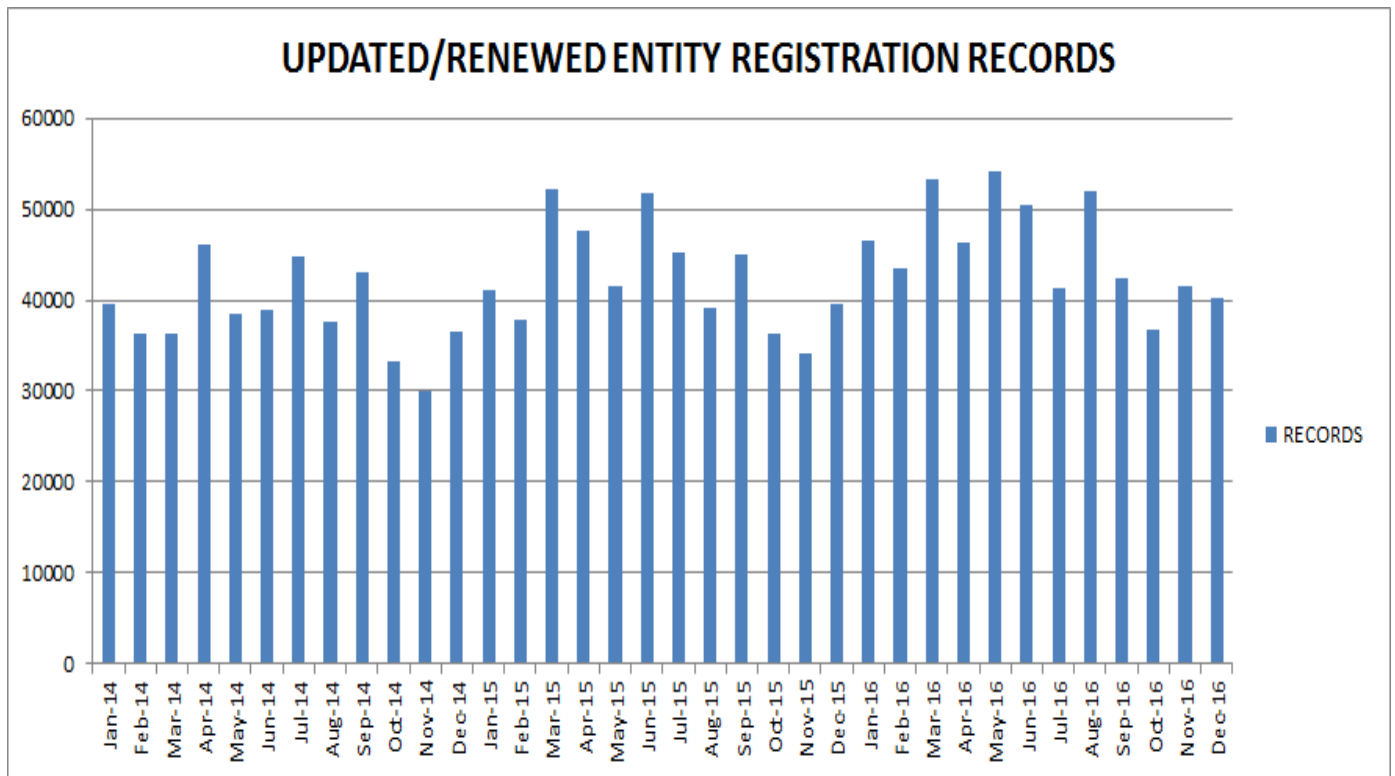
APPENDIX: TECHNICAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Entity Validation Services Statistics

The following statistics provide context for the scope and scale of the requested information related to Entity Validation Services:

- SAM alone has 2 million entity management records of which 590,000 are active registrants
- Average number of these active registrants that have a non-U.S. address - 41,587
- Cyclical nature of entity registration demand:





NOTE: Spikes align to agency use of exclusion uploader to create/update several thousand exclusion records.

The Integrated Award Environment (IAE) Background

The Integrated Award Environment (IAE) is a Presidential E-Government initiative managed by the General Services Administration (GSA). The IAE uses innovative processes and technologies to improve systems and operations for those who award, administer, or receive federal financial assistance (i.e.; grants, loans), contracts, and intergovernmental transactions.

For more detailed information on IAE and the systems it manages, please follow [this link or https://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/105036](https://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/105036)

Current Entity Validation Services Technical Process in SAM

The following describes the current state technical process for Entity Validation Services in SAM

For Statistics on the current Entity Validation Services see Appendix.

1. Entity Registration Records in SAM

A. Register Entity

i. Perform Real-Time Entity Primary Data Confidence Match

a. Description: Provide real-time lookup to pull legal entity name and address based on the unique entity identifier. Conduct confidence match on data entered by entity versus entity primary data in source of record. Provide an indicator if the entity is out of business.

b. Minimum Standards: Byte-by-byte match must be 80% or higher for a result to return. Results must return in less than five seconds.

c. Volume/Number of Calls: Between 6,000 - 16,000 new registrations generated per month. Between 30,000 - 50,000 registrations renewed per month.

ii. Standardize Entity Address

a. Description: Provide real-time lookup based on entity ZIP+4 value for U.S.-based addresses, for addresses where a ZIP+4 value exists.

b. Minimum Standards: Results must be returned in less than five seconds. Percent of those addresses without a ZIP+4 value must be less than 10%.

c. Volume/Number of Calls: Approximately 8% of all registrants in SAM are international, i.e. have non-U.S. addresses. This means between

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4,800 - 12,800 new registrations generated per month require address standardization to populate the ZIP+4 value.

iii. Provide Entity Organizational Data

a. Description: Provide real-time lookup to create entity organizational structure in SAM to include entity's immediate owner and organizational structure.

b. Minimum Standards: Results must be returned in less than five seconds.

c. Volume/Number of Calls: Between 6,000 - 16,000 new registrations generated per month. Each new registration gets a three-layered organizational structure created in SAM upon initial submission. Some entities are single-level, but the call is made for them all.

B. Monitor Changes

i. Monitor Entity Primary Data (Daily)

a. Description: Monitor registered entities for changes to entity primary data. Provide daily output of monitoring results. Updates will be stored for entity use when updating or renewing registration records. User must accept updates.

b. Minimum Standards: At least daily.

c. Volume: Includes all entities registered for monitoring, active and those which expired in the past six months, averaging 600,000 entities on monitoring across the entity primary data elements.

ii. Monitor Entity Organizational Data (Daily)

a. Description: Monitor registered entities for changes to organizational data. Provide daily output of monitoring results. Updates are applied seamlessly in SAM to maintain organizational accuracy.

b. Minimum Standards: At least daily.

c. Volume: Includes organizational structure for all entities registered for monitoring, active and those which expired in the past six months, averaging 600,000 entities.

iii. Monitor Entity Primary Data (Monthly)

- a. Description: Monitor registered entities for changes to organizational data. Provide monthly snapshot of enriched, standardized data. Updates will be applied seamlessly in SAM to maintain organizational accuracy.
- b. Minimum Standards: Monthly batch file, via file transfer protocol.
- c. Volume: Includes organizational structure for all entities registered for monitoring, active and those which expired in the past six months, averaging 600,000 entities.

iv. Monitor Prior Entity Identifier (Monthly)

- a. Description: Monitor prior unique entity identifier for any active registration in SAM. Provide monthly snapshot of previous unique entity identifiers in response to active registrant entity identifiers submitted, i.e. current and prior identifiers.
- b. Minimum Standards: Post response within 24 hours of request, ideally within four hours.
- c. Volume: ~ 600,000 active entity registration records in SAM, response could include up to 1.2 million values

2. Exclusion Records

A. Create New Exclusion

i. Check for Entity Registration (Firm)

- a. Description: Provide real-time lookup for new Firm exclusion records based on unique entity identifier or on Organization Name and Country. If there is an entity registration record, pull over the Legal Entity Name and Physical Address information associated with the entity registration record.
- b. Minimum Standards: Results must be returned in less than five seconds.
- c. Volume: Approximately 600 exclusion records are created for the Classification Type "Firm" each year.

ii. Secondary Check for Entity (Firm)

- a. Description: Provide real-time lookup for new Firm exclusion records based on unique entity identifier or on Organization Name and Country, if there is not an entity registration record in SAM. Return results containing Legal Entity Name and Physical Address.

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b. Minimum Standards: Results must be returned in less than five seconds.

c. Volume: Approximately 600 exclusion records are created for the Classification Type "Firm" each year.

iii. Launch Investigation (Special Entity Designation)

a. Description: Provide interface for SAM to submit Organization Name, Country, and State (if U.S. was selected for Country) for "Special Entity Designation" exclusion records. Conduct investigation on information provided to determine if there is a close match with an assigned unique entity identifier. Provide response back to SAM with entity Legal Entity Name and Physical Address for any close match found.

b. Minimum Standards: Results must be returned within three business days.

c. Volume: Approximately 600 exclusion records are created for the Classification Type "Special Entity Designation" each year.

iv. Add Additional Locations (Load Entity Complete Organizational Structure)

a. Description: Provide real-time lookup to build complete organizational structure for any entity, worldwide, including every other entity to which the requested unique entity identifier is associated. Interface can be called during creation of exclusion records allowing the suspension and debarment official to add additional locations to an exclusion, as well as when viewing excluded family members of a given entity via search.

b. Minimum Standards: A response, either actual results or a notification results will take longer to generate due to the size of the organizational structure, must be returned within five seconds.

c. Volume: Approximately 600 exclusion records are created for the Classification Type "Firm" each year. Each new exclusion record requires the complete entity organizational structure. Some entities have organizational structures of more than 2,000 locations.